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Cond Nast International Luxury Conference vets Seoul as "Future Luxury" hub

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Dongdaemun Design Plaza, Seoul

By JEN KING

Cond Nast International is narrowing its lens for the second annual Luxury Conference, concentrating 2016's event on South Korea and its neighbors, China and Japan.

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Being held in Seoul, South Korea April 20-21, "Future Luxury" will be led by International Vogue's Suzy Menkes as she and luxury business and creative leaders explore the opportunities of the world's most interesting and dynamic markets. In partnership with Place Vendôme and Swarovski, sessions will touch on South Korea's penchant for technology, its youthful population, strong beauty market and sensational pop culture.

"The most significant change in the luxury arena is the fact that experience is becoming as desirable as product," said Suzy Menkes, editor of International Vogue, London. "Whether it is a spa visit or a live performance, the millennial generation does not necessarily link luxury with buying an actual object.

"The Cond Nast International conference in Seoul includes a look at the power of Instagram, advances in technology that are transforming fashion and how models are becoming their own masters," she said.

The future's got Seoul

Cond Nast International's Future Luxury will be held at The Shilla Hotel, considered to be one of Seoul's finest, most elegant and refined hotels. The setting is optimal, allowing brand delegates to discuss how South Korea is on pace to become a new hub for high-end fashion.

South Korea's popular culture, brands and blazing Internet speeds are propelling the country into top global tastemaker territory, according to L2's founder at the L2 Forum 2014.

Whether it is a multinational beauty brand taking cues from South Korean labels or Seoul's rapid climb up the luxury mountain, the Southeast Asian country is disrupting global dynamics on a few fronts ([see story](#)).

Supported by the City of Seoul, the two-day conference will bring together nearly 500 attendees from more than 30 countries to discuss commercial opportunities, explore sources of fresh inspiration and examine how Northeast Asia is becoming the future of the luxury industry.

"As a center for Korea's growing luxury fashion industry, I am really pleased to support the event," said Park Won-Soon, mayor of Seoul, in a statement. "Holding the 2016 Cond Nast International Luxury Conference will be a

cornerstone in the continued development of Seoul as a global fashion hub."

The conference program features an extensive lineup of creative and business speakers well-versed in the market's offering and potential for the luxury industry. Sessions include formal discussions and keynote presentations touching on topics ranging from South Korean beauty, the popularity of K-Pop and consumer trends of Northeast Asia, among others.

Cond Nast International will welcome attendees at a cocktail reception April 19, jointly hosted by MCM, a South Korean handbag brand. The reception will be held at the Yeong Bin Gwan, a Korean-style banquet annex on The Shilla Hotel's property.



The Shilla Hotel's Yeong Bin Gwan event space

Sessions of the event will be held within The Shilla Hotel's convention center. The conference kicks off with a conversation on the power of social media led by Ms. Menkes featuring Olivier Rousteing, creative director of Balmain and Eva Chen, head of fashion partnership at Instagram.

This will be followed by themed talks on the traveling Asian luxury shopper and the rise of duty free, how luxury will be transformed by future technologies and the "unstoppable power of K'." Guests will also hear from Hugo Boss designer Jason Wu, accessories designer Anya Hindmarch, Vogue China's editor in chief and delegates from Chanel, Este Lauder, Swarovski and Kering Group, among others.

Day one will conclude with a Cond Nast International and Place Vendme Qatar cocktail reception party at the Dongdaemun Design Plaza.

Inaugurated in 2014, and referred to as the DDP, the urban landmark was designed by the late architect Zaha Hadid ([see story](#)) and Samoo Architects & Engineers. The popular tourist destination features neo-futuristic design and is considered the centerpiece of South Korea's fashion sector, with Chanel selecting the DDP as the venue of its cruise 2016 runway presentation.



Zaha Hadid's DDP in Seoul

The following day keeps South Korea as its focus, but expands broader into the luxury industry. Day two begins with a deep dive into Northeast Asian beauty consumption and sentiment with a look at plastic surgery and skincare in the region.

China's slowing economy has afforded neighboring countries such as South Korea an opportunity to become a tourist destination, which in effect has brought increased exposure to the country's products.

South Korean beauty products in particular have seen a rise in popularity, at the expense of Western brands who entered the Chinese market when the playing field was more fruitful. According to L2's "The Beauty China: The Rise of Korean Brands" Insight Report, Western skincare and color cosmetics have seen share erosion while interest in South Korean beauty is skyrocketing, now accounting for nearly a quarter of cosmetic imports to China ([see story](#)).

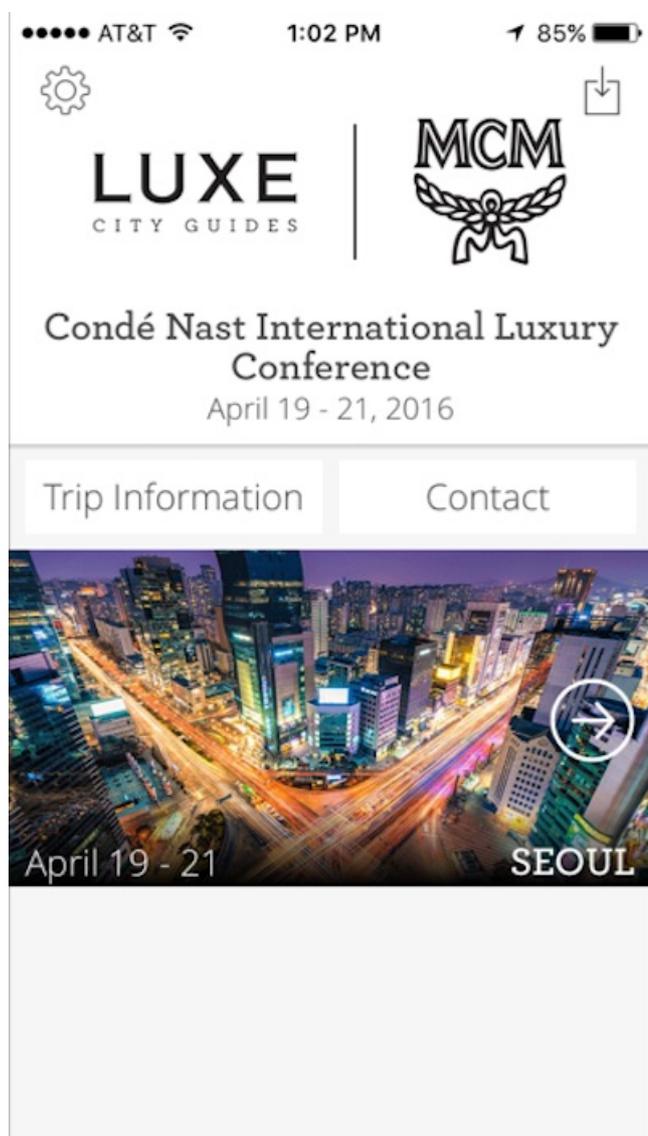
Afterwards, the conference continues with sector topics such as the power of accessories, the role of fashion as culture and ending on "industrial craftsmanship." The conference will conclude with a networking lunch.

The full agenda can be found [here](#).

Experiencing Seoul

To better acquaint all attendees with the future of luxury, Condé Nast International is leveraging mobile application LUXE City Guides to lead the way. For the conference, LUXE City Guides, together with MCM, curated a personalized digital guide to Seoul.

Housed on LUXE City Guides' app ([see story](#)), content includes a highly curated selection of the best experiences Seoul has to offer its guests. The content was compiled by LUXE's resident curator to give on-point recommendations of Seoul's top cultural attractions, eateries, shopping and spas.



LUXE City Guide curated for Condé Nast International Luxury Conference attendees

Attendees can customize the experience further through half-day and full-day itineraries. Helpful downloadable maps with directions are also available to let attendees make the most out of their time in Seoul.

The app will also serve as Condé Nast International's agenda platform.

"Seoul is unique in creating a flourishing beauty business that includes both product and enormous possibilities for cosmetic surgery," Ms. Menkes said. "Logically, South Korean fascination with international luxury brands will develop into a desire for local designers."

"In introducing a 'K-culture' for music, art and films, the aesthetic of South Korea is very attractive to Chinese consumers, who are already numerous as duty free shoppers," she said. "By including the subjects of the traveling luxury shoppers across Asia and the ever-growing duty free retail market worth an estimated \$8 billion, the conference will examine big business.

"But the presence of designers Steve J and Yoni P will also help the conference delegates to understand the reality of making K-fashion as powerful as K-pop."

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